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Journal of the Society of Arts.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1859.

NOTICE TO LOCAL BOARDS.

Forms No. 1 and No. 2 (see Appendix to the Examination Programme) have been issued to the Secretary of each Local Board, and careful attention to them is particularly requested.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF INVENTIONS.

The Exhibition will be opened on Monday next, the 25th inst., and will remain open every day until further notice, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is free to members and their friends. Members by ticket, or by written order, having their signature, may admit any number of persons. Members of Institutions in Union with the Society are admitted on showing their cards of membership.

CONVERSAZIONI.

The Council have arranged for two Conversazioni during the present Session; the first, on Saturday, the 7th May, at the Society's House, the card for which will admit the Member only; the second, on Saturday, the 28th May, at the South Kensington Museum, the card for which will admit the Member and two ladies, or one gentleman. Cards for each of these evenings have been issued. Members who have not received them are requested to communicate with the Secretary of the Society of Arts.

Members of Institutions who are anxious to attend either of these Conversazioni, are requested to apply to the Secretary of the Society of Arts, through the Secretary of the Institution to which they belong.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

It is officially announced that the National Portrait Gallery will be open to the public, by tickets, on Easter Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, from ten to five o'clock.

Tickets may be obtained, on application, of Mr. Metchim, stationer, 20, Parliament-street, and of Mr. Dufour, stationer, 17A, Great George-street, Westminster.

The Trustees do not feel that tickets can be entirely dispensed with, on account of the smallness of the temporary apartments where the col-

lection is located. Hereafter, when the Portrait Gallery becomes a popular and extensive institution, it will always be a pleasure to remember having seen it in the first state of development.

When the National Gallery of old masters was first opened to the public it was likewise in a private residence—Mr. Angerstein's house—in Pall-mall.

At present the National Portrait Gallery comprises about seventy pictures. The names of the persons and of the artists, with the dates of the pictures, are affixed to the frames, and biographical catalogues have also been prepared.

EXAMINATIONS, 1859. — LOCAL BOARDS.

The following Local Board has been appointed since the last announcement:—

FOR SKIPTON MECHANICS' INSTITUTION.

Mr. Robert Blackburn.

Mr. Samuel Farey.

Mr. John Heap.

Mr. Thomas Rendall, *Secretary*.

EXAMINATION PRIZE FUND, 1859.

The following are the Donations up to the present date:—

	£	s.
John Ball, Examiner in Book-keeping (2nd donation).....	5	5
Harry Chester, Vice-Pres. (2nd donation)...	5	0
C. Wentworth Dilke, Vice-Pres., Chairman of Council (4th donation).....	10	10
T. Dixon.....	1	1
Frederick Edwards (annual)	1	1
J. G. Frith, Mem. of Council (2nd donation)	5	5
F. Seymour Haden (annual)	2	2
W. Haldimand	10	10
Edward Highton (annual)	2	2
James Holmes (annual)	1	1
Henry Johnson (2nd donation)	25	0
London Committee of the Oxford Middle Class Examinations	5	5
Charles Ratcliff (annual)	10	10
Rev. Dr. Temple	6	6
A Teacher	5	0
Matthew Uzielli	50	0
Rev. A. Wilson	2	2

COLONIAL INSTITUTION.

A Society of Arts, Agriculture, and Commerce has been instituted in Belize. The objects which the promoters of the Honduras Association have in view are:—

First. The development and utilization of the numerous resources of this colony, the extension of its commerce, and the general increase of its importance and value as a possession of the British crown.

Secondly. To afford the means of intellectual improvement, and the acquirement of useful knowledge to all classes of the community, not alone to adults, but also to those pupils of the various schools whose progress in education, and whose taste, will enable and incline them to take advantage of those means,—to present to the

public a mode of rational occupation in their hours of leisure, which, whilst it will instruct, will also entertain, and to substitute for the pleasures of sense, the higher and more lasting enjoyments of the mind.

The promoters of this Association propose to appropriate a suitable building to the purposes of the Society.

This building will include a reading room, a lecture room, and a museum.

The reading room will contain a collection of instructive and entertaining books; some of the London daily and weekly papers; several of the cheap English and American publications, and a few of the quarterly and monthly periodicals.

In the lecture room, lectures will be delivered on different branches of knowledge,—on history, philosophy, science, the mechanical, and the fine arts, and poetry,—but all discussions connected with theology and politics will be strictly prohibited.

In the museum will be deposited all the specimens which can be procured of the animal, vegetable, and mineral productions of Honduras, and to this repertory all persons taking an interest in the diffusion of knowledge, the progress of the mind, and the prosperity of the colony, will be invited to contribute.

It is also proposed to establish a botanical garden, in which, not only all the plants indigenous to Honduras will be cultivated, but also those peculiar to other countries, the growth of which a tropical climate will not prohibit.

The members of the Society will be elected by ballot. A subscription of ten dollars per annum, to be paid in advance, will be required. The President of the Society is His Excellency Frederick Seymour, H.M. Superintendent.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

By W. WEMYSS ANDERSON.

As the enormous value which now attaches to good and favourably situated land in sugar-producing countries invests with increased interest and importance all communications on the subject, let me beg the use of your columns for a few observations. Having been in Belize on a visit of business for some weeks, I availed myself of an opportunity to ascend the Belize river, that I might see what was beyond the low-lying land which immediately surrounds this town, and which, I fear, has often impressed casual visitors as to the whole country. I was surprised and delighted. No description could have effected such a change in my original impressions. As we proceeded up the river, the land began very gently but sensibly to rise, and the mangroves to disappear. After sailing about seven miles, the country opened beautifully, and the land appeared covered with excellent pasture, on which cattle, sheep, and horses were feeding, and settlers' houses appeared here and there. I observed one handsome residence with outhouses, and a small sugar work attached, and abundance of orange and cocoa nut trees scattered over it. We visited an intelligent and industrious German and his family, who had settled on a large tract of land on the bank of the river. He had enclosed a large garden, and was rapidly making money by supplying the Belize market with yams, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and fruits of all sorts. Though the land all around, as far as the eye could reach, was flat and covered with trees, yet it was not *parched*, and he could depend on the rains for preserving his cultivation in life, and bringing it to full maturity. He had four white men engaged as labourers, and on every side he and they appeared to be surrounded with comfort and abundance. He had not devoted himself to sugar culture, for he had not capital to erect works or procure cattle, but he had a patch of canes, which, like the

rest of his cultivation, appeared thriving, though it was neglected. All around could be easily ploughed. No manure would be requisite for many years; and, had sugar been the object of his industry, he could have rolled the casks into flat-bottomed boats, and in two hours have had them at the ship's side, in the roadstead off Belize. The far-famed advantages of the first sugar district in Cuba, Cienfuego, which I have seen, are exceeded by this district, inasmuch as, added to equal fertility and openness to the economical operation of ploughing instead of the hoe, it possesses the incalculable advantage of access by water, a deep, soft, flowing river, and easy economical shipment and sea carriage, at freights not exceeding what are charged on sugars from Jamaica. The healthiness of the district I found to be certified on all hands, and by every one who had resided in the country. So far as my own short experience and feeling may constitute an additional testimony, it has been confirmatory.

But this, I learn, is by no means the most favourable district. There are immense tracts to the northward, around the rapidly increasing town of Corasaal, which are considered more rich and fertile in respect of soil, and equally as accessible in respect of water carriage. I greatly doubt whether England has any colony with equal agricultural advantages, especially for the production of sugar. Cotton also grows abundantly, and probably the most valuable kind, the "Sea Island," would thrive best of all. The rate of taxation is very low—the official establishments are on a moderate scale—there is no public debt—and the administration of law is prompt, cheap, and efficient. In all these respects its advantages are remarkable.

The progress of sugar cultivation has been slow, from want of local capital, and want of concentration of the scattered population in select districts, where capital and enterprise united, constitute a demand on laborious industry, in exchange for liberal compensation. That liberal wages to labourers, and liberal profits to agriculturists devoting themselves to sugar and cotton culture, would be realised, cannot be doubted. Already there are several hundred tons of sugar annually produced and made the subject of excise duty. From the statements I have received, it is apparent that abundance of land is available that will produce three tons per acre, and that when the cane is once established, it will last from ten to fifteen years at the least. If this do not satisfy the highest expectation of agricultural profit, especially when united to the easy water-carriage I have referred to, nothing else will. Governor Hinchs, of Barbadoes, in a lately published letter of his, to Mr. Tappen, of New York, stated that sugar estates in that island were worth £100 per acre. If so, what are the hundreds of thousands of acres of first-class sugar lands in this colony, on the banks of deep-flowing rivers, worth? I leave your readers to calculate.

Since commencing this article I have heard of the establishment, in London, of a limited liability company, with Mr. Samuel Gurney, M.P., as its trustee, for the cultivation of certain lands of British Honduras, with a mahogany-cutting business therein, which will secure dividends from the commencement, and afford the certainty of a large ultimate augmentation of the value of the company's stock.

Of its success beyond any other land-scheme that has been proposed, no one, I think, will be able to doubt, after they shall have been made aware of the true condition and internal relations of the country, its close proximity to England, and the salubrity of its climate. Its main disadvantage is the ease and abundance that a small amount of effort secures, which can only be met by the union in educational and civilising measures of the Government and the better classes, who have an interest in the soil.